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TESTIMONY RE: **PROPOSED BILL NO. 6269 AN ACT CONCERNING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH**

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

MARCH 4, 2015,

Good Day Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA) related to: **PROPOSED BILL NO. 6269 AN ACT CONCERNING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH.**

I am Mary Jane Williams Ph.D., RN current chairperson of Government Relations Committee for the Connecticut Nurses Association and professor emeritus from Central Connecticut State University.

Despite our best efforts, homelessness in Connecticut has reached alarming levels. Last year, Connecticut's emergency shelters alone served 11,700 people, including more than 1,500 children. The number of people in shelters and transitional programs at any given point in time increased 3% from 2009 to 2010, while shelter bed usage has exceeded 100% during all of 2010 and much of 2009. While collectively we may have slowed the rate of growth in homelessness over time, the numbers continue to increase. We need to do more, and we need to do it better. (CCEH, Portraits In Homelessness, 2010)

* I should be noted that this data is four years old. The statistics have most likely changed as the economy as changed and homelessness has increased.

Early intervention mental health services, is essential to the development of positive outcomes for the growing number of homeless children who come from a variety of settings that are often not conducive to sound mental health. Intervention will provide the child with the skills essential to a productive life

I therefore urge you to support: **PROPOSED BILL NO. 6269 AN ACT CONCERNING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH.** Thank you for your attention to this proposed legislation and for your commitment to the Health of the public we all serve.

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